of the needs of their tribesmen; that, in fact, the patronage system is relative to the traditional situation. Unavoidably, the al-Qasr cooperative society is dominated by one tribe: 107 of its members are from the 'Aishaibat, while only 32 are from other tribes. This relationship between traditional and modern structures is common throughout the Western Desert. When a new cooperative is organized within the boundaries of a certain tribal mintaqa, members of the local tribe will resign from other cooperatives to join "their own." Thus, when a new cooperative was founded in Marsa Matruh, twenty members of the Jum'iat tribe left the al-Qasr branch to join the new chapter which catered largely to the needs of the Jum'iat in the town.

The World Food Program of the Food and Agriculture Organization (F.A.O.) of the United Nations operates through the cooperative society. It has had an impact on the economy of the Bedouins of al-Qasr. In 1963, this organization, with the cooperation of the U.A.R. government, proposed to stabilize economic conditions in the Western Desert by providing 4,000 Bedouin families (20,000 persons) with enough food and fodder to help them through the three dry summer months. The program was designed to encourage mixed and settled farming through the reclamation of 20,000 acres of arid desert land, while its range improvement project was to furnish pasturage for 500,000 sheep throughout the Northwestern Coastal Zone. In al-Qasr,

1: Obermeyer E-5 (1964-1965) 1969 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
'Aishaibat

747
177
433
[474]

this number included pasturage for 11,000 sheep (Abu-Zeid n.d.: 19-27).

F.A.O. has encountered a number of serious problems and the program has received setbacks. The program, as an agent of social change, failed to take proper measure of the structural and ideological aspects of the Bedouin traditional system. Range improvement projects were carried out with disregard for existing tribal boundaries (the mintaqa) in the desert. In one case, the Bedouins removed fences on their property, and allowed sheep to destroy an entire experimental range area. Food distribution has fallen short because polygyny as a structural feature of marriage and the Bedouin family was not taken into account. The government estimated five persons per family, and planned to distribute food to 4,000 families. They were only able to subsidize 3,281 families. Aid officials failed to consider the strength of Bedouin values. To qualify for government aid, a Bedouin must belong to his local cooperative society. Some Bedouins wish to remain independent of government business, and others cannot afford the 50 piasters membership dues. A man may borrow money from another, of course, but in al-Qasr a "debt" is actually a particular kind of social relation which, like all others, carries with it a set of specific rights and obligations. A debt among Bedouins is a complex relationship: it may draw two parties together, or it may be, as it is with the Kachins of Burma (Leach 1954:153),

747
177
474
426
[571]

747 the basis of conflict. Bedouins may be unwilling to contract
177 such a potentially significant relationship for the 50 piasters
474 it takes to join the cooperative society. In yet another area,
426 program administrators concerned with nutritional improvement
571 have ignored the culturally important areas of food preferences
747 and, more seriously, food prohibitions. The Bedouins, who
177 subsist mainly on their own animal products, barley bread, and
262 a few fresh vegetables, are extremely hesitant to accept what they consider ritually "unclean meat from foreigners," powdered milk, dried fish, and Kraft cheese. They are willing to
747 accept grain, flour, and the cottonseed cakes which are used
177 as fodder. In other words, the Bedouins seem to be presented
[178] with poor alternatives which may tend to reinforce choices
[433] related to the traditional productive organization, i.e., pastoralism. The exogenous stimuli to change are so culturally objectionable that they actually generate conflict situations and misunderstanding between agents and recipients of change.

747 Government programs have aimed at one aspect of
177 Bedouin society, the economic structure. They have ignored
433 the cultural underpinning of social organization, the system of meanings in terms of which social action takes place (Geertz 1957:32-54). The relationship between social and economic behavior is, of course, an extremely important one. But the economic structure cannot be transformed independently of a specific cultural structure.

654 crop, until five to seven years after planting. To alleviate
245 the difficulties of this period of apprehension, which the
179 433 Governor of the desert province refers to as "the dangerous
[749] period," the United Nations F.A.O. aid program was designed
and put into operation in al-Qasr.

654 A Bedouin may purchase an olive seedling from the
245 government for the price of two piasters (about six cents).
179 This same seedling costs the government 26 piasters. Once
433 435 through "the dangerous period," a Bedouin can expect a yield
of 120 to 150 kilos of olives from one tree. Olives sell
for about 15 piasters per kilo. Or, at a cost of 5 piasters
per kilo, the olives can be converted into oil. One ton of
olives will render about 23 per cent oil. Olive oil is now
considered a luxury item in Egypt, and the market price is
very high. But only the Bedouin with a large harvest of
olives finds it profitable to sell his product on the oil
market. These conditions have made many Bedouins willing to
convert from horticulture and sedentary pastoralism to arbor-
iculture.

654 Between 1960 and 1964, the government reclamation
245 program has planted a total of 9,514 olive trees on land
179 registered to 124 individuals. The average distribution of
trees, about seventy-six per man, is indicative of one of the
problems related to change in al-Qasr and about which we have
spoken earlier. Most of the trees have gone to men who, before

685 such, deviates from the normal pattern of cases dealt with by the cus-
627 tomary law in the conventional way. The men selected by the Geneishat
695 included, in addition to Rabbu and his father Hakim, Shei'eb and his
613 three brothers, Hakim's cousin Samsoun and his four brothers and Hakim's uncle Sheikh Qudura and his sons. The date of the oath was set for June tenth. Two days before, the two parties involved in the dispute invited a number of the important people of other tribal segments in the area to [492] be witnesses to the oath. All involved started to travel to the tomb of [494] Sidi Dnain, some on donkeys, others by bus or train. At six o'clock on [497] the morning of the oath everybody gathered in the courtyard outside the [118] tomb of the saint. The granddaughter of the saint works as a mediator [787] between the spirit of her grandfather and his followers announced that [706] the saint was ready for the oath and everybody went inside preparing for the oath. Before the oath was taken the Geneishat asked Hakim if his son and the fourteen men they had chosen were present and Hakim said they were. Since the Geneishat were from a different tribal segment and lived outside the area, they had no personal knowledge of most of the men who were to take the oath. Knowing the reputation of Hakim they [212] asked the men to present their identification cards to check them against [747] the list they had. At that time Hakim said that some of the men didn't have identification cards because they had not applied for aid from the World Food Program. Then the Geneishat demanded that those without cards should be identified by members of other tribal segments who had come as witnesses. Hakim refused and then admitted that one of the men was absent and that he had put another in place of him. But when the Geneishat learned that the one to be absent was Sheikh Qudura, they insisted that